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ABSTRACT

The use of the Silent Way method of second language instruction in beginning and intermediate Spanish classes at the college level is described. The approach encourages student self-responsibility for learning the target language according to learning strategies selected by the student. Although the method was used during three semesters, the students underwent the greatest metamorphosis in their abilities to independently interact in Spanish during the first semester. Student's initial reactions to the courses, pronunciation, evaluation of student progress, the link between input and acquisition, teacher silence and the cultivation of communicative confidence, the effect of the Silent Way approach on student anxiety levels, and student performance on a cloze test are discussed. Sample student compositions and an editing task are appended. (RW)

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Silent Way

in

The University Setting

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Introduction

The intent of the present paper is to report on an experience with Silent Way methodology as it was implemented in an elementary and intermediate sequence of Spanish classes taught by this author while he was on the faculty of the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). The paper focuses on those aspects of the experience which are relevant to our understanding of how such a methodology functions when it is subjected to the constraints usually encountered in an academic setting and on what such an experience may add to our knowledge of the language learning process in the classroom environment. The basis for discussion is drawn primarily from the instructor's observations and, more importantly, from feedback provided by the students who participated in the experience. Also included is a brief examination of the results of a cloze test and editing task administered at the conclusion of the first and third semesters respectively of the three-semester sequence. Although the paper focuses primarly on a Spanish course taught at UTSA, there will be occasion to draw from student commentary from a Silent Way Spanish class offered at the University of Delaware during the fall semester of 1981.

It is important to underscore that what is to be considered in the present study is not the result of a controlled experiment but an experience with a particular methodology in a real classroom setting.[1] Although experimentation has been an integral component

of language teaching/learning research over the past decade, one must nevertheless exercise some care when interpreting the results of basic experimental research. As most readers are no doubt aware, controlled experimentation in methodology research has generally produced positive results (see, for example Asher 1982, Curran 1976, Gary 1975, Postovsky 1974). As Brown (1977) cautions, however, rarely is there perfect transference of results obtained under experimental conditions to the classroom setting. This is because 'there are so many variables to control that there is no possibility of producing a serious experiment without distorting the complexity of the teaching situation to such an extent that it loses all contact with reality' (Brumfit 1980, 4).

Jakobovits (1974) argues strenuously for the need to distinguish between basic experimental research on the one hand and applied research on the other. According to Jakobovits, basic research is a means for arriving at general hypotheses about human behavior defined in terms of abstract laws and principles based on observations made under controlled artificial and nonnatural settings, while applied research is a tool to tease out additional knowledge about human behavior in a particular social setting (1974, 93). Applied research is no less systematic than basis research. It is, however, predicated on a different set of observational data, including personal judgment, ordinary experience, and intuition (Jakobovits 1974, 93). The central tenet of applied research is that the integrity of the social setting not be compromised for the sake of maintaining

scientific standards; rather, it is the scientific standards that are in a sense compromised in order to maintain the integrity of the problem under investigation (Jakobovits 1974, 93).

Because of the special status that has been attached to basic scientific research, we have perhaps failed to recognize the importance of applied research. Consequently, we may have become overly concerned with such questions as that raised by Varvel (1979) as to whether Silent Way methodology is a panacea or a pipedream. Varvel's inconclusive answer that further research is needed before we can adequately determine the viability of Silent Way reflects a trend in the literature which, in this writer's opinion, has been influenced by studies conducted under controlled conditions in the name of science. It is difficult to imagine that any instructional strategy is or can be a panacea. On the other hand, we should not imprudently cast aside a methodology as a pipedream simply because it fails to produce the desired effect in a given set of circumstances. As Brumfit (1980, 4) correctly observes, 'since teaching is the expression of a relationship between teacher and learner, it will, indeed, must vary whenever one of the parties changes.' The observations made in this report, therefore, will be more fully appreciated if viewed from the perspective of the applied research model, as outlined by Jakobovits, rather than from that of the basic experimental research paradigm.

Before proceeding, it may prove helpful to consider, if only briefly, the basic priniples of Silent Way philosophy as they are effectively summarized by Stevick (1980). According to Stevick,

the essence of Silent Way is its affirmation of the individual learner in his or her self-contained independence. Rather than forcing the language on the learner, Silent Way seeks to encourage learners to use their own internal resources to make decisions on how best to achieve the desired outcome as offered by the teacher. From the outset, the Silent Way teacher imparts to students the notion that, right or wrong, they have the freedom to produce utterances for themselves and that they are not expected to echo the instructor or memorize dialogues and rules of grammar. Giving freedom to students does not mean, however, that the instructor abrogates control of the classroom. The teacher maintains control of the teaching act but surrenders the responsibility for learning to the students by encouraging them at every step to take the initiative in expressing themselves freely. In Silent Way methodology, learning is not subordinate to teaching; rather, learners are given every opportunity to utilize their own internal learning strategies and to discover for themselves a set of heuristic principles for acquiring the target language.[2]

In what follows, it will be observed that students indeed made remarkable progress toward the necessary level of self-reliance in their ability to interact in Spanish. Although the experience continued for three semesters, it was during the first semester that the students underwent the greatest metamorphosis in their abilities and attitudes. Consequently, much of the discussion will focus on the early stages of the experience.

Setting

The Silent Way course began during the regular summer session of 1979 at UTSA. The students who participated in the class were not aware at the time that they were enrolling in a special section of Spanish. No attempt was made to recruit students for the class. At the initial class meeting, the students were informed that theirs was to be a class taught in accordance with a methodology that was different from that used in other sections of beginning Spanish. They were told that the method required a higher degree of student involvement than they perhaps had experienced in previous foreign language study. This is all they were told. Stevick (1980, 73) comments that while providing students with a description of the method to be used in a language class would probably lessen to some extent the initial anxiety experienced by many students in such circumstances, it might also prevent them from learning about themselves as learners.

The students were given the option of dropping the section and adding a regular section of beginning Spanish scheduled at the same hour. According to academic regulations in effect at the time, students were allowed to drop/add classes during the first three days of the summer session. No one from a class population of twenty six opted to leave the special section.

At the time, the undergraduate population of UTSA was older than that which one generally finds at most universities. UTSA is primarily a commuter school, which serves the greater San Antonio area and draws heavily from that segment of the general population which holds

either part-time or full-time employment and from military personnel and their families. The average age of the students participating in the Silent Way class was between twenty six and thirty. The general education requirements of the university at the time required all degree-seeking students to complete nine hours of study in a single foreign language. In order to guide students in selecting the proper course level, UTSA utilized the CEEB foreign language examination. The results of the placement, however, served a recommendatory function only. Thus, the typical beginning language class was usually comprised of students with some previous exposure to the target language as well as of students who were genuine neophytes. Several students in the Silent Way class had begun their study of Spanish in the previous spring semester but for whatever reason had decided to drop the course and resume their language studies during the summer semester.

As previously stated, it was intended from the outset that the Silent Way class should be subjected to all of the constraints normally encountered in a university environment. Two immediate problems that arose had to do with scheduling of the special section during the ensuing fall and spring semesters and the matter of the syllabus as it related to the other sections of Spanish. To provide students with the opportunity to continue with the Silent Way throughout the regular semesters, the special section was so designated in the fall and spring schedule of courses and no one was permitted to register for the section without the instructor's permission. This

procedure was necessary to prevent students who had begun their study of Spanish in one of the other sections from inadvertently enrolling in the Silent Way section.[3]

Even though every effort was made to allow students to continue their study of Spanish in the special class throughout the required three-course sequence, there was no guarantee that their schedules would permit them to do so; nor was there any assurance that they would even opt to continue in the class should they have found the experience not to their liking. In order to facilitate the possible transition of any students from the Silent Way class to a regular second-semester section, it was decided that the established grammar-based syllabus would be adopted. Once the course was underway, however, it soon became apparent that it would be necessary to deviate from the syllabus, initially in terms of the sequence in which the structures of the language were to be presented and later with respect to the amount of material that could be offered to the students. Rigid adherence to a highly structured grammatical syllabus would have represented an important departure from Silent Way procedure, which encourages the spontaneous development of lessons on the basis of students' needs at any given moment (see Varvel 1979, 487). Moreover, after a slow beginning, the students began to progress at a more rapid pace than the instructor had come to expect after many years of language teaching. This made it possible to present an increased quantity of target-language input than was called for by the preordained syllabus.[4]

Initial Reactions and Pronunciation

As pointed out earlier, one of the primary sources of evidence for the present study would be the commentary furnished by the students who participated in the Silent Way class. Stevick (1980) elicited similar feedback from a Silent Way class in Turkish conducted at the University of Hawaii. Although both sets of data yield important insights into the language learning process in the Silent Way setting, there is a difference. Stevick's class was comprised of language teachers, who were actually enrolled in his graduate course on language teaching methodology. As part of the course requirements, his students were to submit a daily report on their feelings, perceptions and observations relating to the ten-day Turkish experience. In the Spanish class, on the other hand, the students were asked to report their observations only twice during the semester: after the first three class meetings and on the penultimate day of the course. It was felt that if the students had been asked to provide formal feedback on a regular basis, they perhaps would have shifted their focus from the learning experience to a more direct concern with the details of the methodology. By and large, this is what transpired in Stevick's Turkish class. The teachers, as might be expected, frequently were more concerned with the finer points of the methodology than with learning Turkish. Several of Stevick's students displayed an anxiety commonly expressed by language teachers over the amount of material that one must master when endeavoring to learn a second language:

'"I feel that the Silent Way really lulls one into a false sense of security. In class, I feel that I'm speaking Turkish and am very proud and pleased. But when I think about it, I really know very little"' (Stevick 1980, 79);'"To look back at the progress we have made is revealing, but to look at the whole picture is frightening"'(Stevick 1980, 81). As we will see, the students from the Spanish experience were not the least bit concerned with the quantity of material that had been learned or that remained to be learned. On the contrary, they were most enthusiastic about their progress toward fluency in Spanish, especially when compared with what they had been able to do as a result of prior language-learning experiences.

An almost unanimous feature of the students' comments made after the first three class meetings was that they had anticipated having a negative experience. This was true for those students who had come to the class with some previous exposure to language learning as well as for the neophytes, who had fallen prey to the general consensus among students that foreign language study is a negative experience to be avoided until the last possible moment. Typical of the early comments are the following: 'I came to this class with a fear of learning a language. I had always been told how hard it was. I had started Spanish in the spring and dropped it in a week. This made me more nervous. But now I feel much better and have hopes of learning Spanish'; 'Spanish, everyone told me, was very difficult with lots of memorization but the way you're teaching it is going to be less work while gaining lots of knowledge'; 'In the

past I have found hours and hours at memorizing a very difficult way to learn. I do feel as an "older" student with no previous language background I am at a distinct disadvantage in most classes. But I do not feel I will be in this class.'

By the end of the third class meeting, the class had focused on pronunciation and learning numbers but had not yet encountered what has become the hallmark of Silent Way methodology, the cuisenaire rods. The Silent Way technique for developing pronunciation skills requires students to produce utterances, the meaning of which is often opaque, especially in the early stages of the learning process. Gattegno recommends that work on pronunciation not be postponed until the students have acquired sufficient vocabulary to comprehend all of what they are saying, since 'in teaching pronunciation, meaning can be a hinderance; an interference, in the learning' (Gattegno 1976, 25). By having students produce utterances which to them are meaningless, Gattegno believes they will 'gain a sense of what they have to do with themselves as utterers before embarking upon any other study requiring utterance and something else as well . . . this will free students from their own habits of utterance and make them concentrate all their energies in making sense of how words and sentences should sound in the new language' (Gattegno 1976, 26).

Several of the Spanish students found the lack of comprehension to be particularly frustrating, as illustrated by the following comment: 'You should also translate the meaning as you go on. Some students in class have or I have heard them say "I wish I knew what I was

saying".' For other students, the technique for teaching pronunciation represented a positive departure from more orthodox procedures. One student remarked that 'the teaching of pronunciation seems to be more effective than in conventional courses of instruction', and another commented that 'the method is very helpful for everyone's pronunciation.'

Due to the time constraints under which the class had to operate, it was not feasible to dedicate more than three sessions to pronunciation. Nevertheless, throughout the remainder of the initial semester, it was apparent that most students were actively refining and adjusting their pronunciation, albeit unconsciously, despite the shift in focus of classroom interaction away from the phonetics of Spanish.

Evaluation

According to Gattegno, evaluation of learner progress in the target language is not a question of subjecting students to criterion-referenced examinations but is a matter of constant observation of learners interacting in the language. The point of evaluation is to discover how students are able to perform in the target language. Consequently, there is little value in determining what a learner does or does not know about the language (Gattegno 1976, 136). Language, for Gattegno, is a skill to be acquired rather than a body of knowledge to be mastered. Even though the primary means of assessing progress in the Silent Way Spanish class was through observation of student performance on a daily basis, the instructor felt com-

pelled to incorporate a more formalized evaluation procedure into the course syllabus as well. It must be remembered that despite its experimental nature, the Silent Way class was, after all, a three-credit course to be used in partial fulfillment of the general education requirement, and as such, students more than likely anticipated some type of formal testing activity to be included in the syllabus. At the outset of the semester, therefore, the students were informed that in addition to a daily assessment of their performance, they would be given a final examination comprised of a cloze passage and a three-page composition to be written in class on the final day of the semester. While the students expressed little concern over the cloze portion of the examination, no doubt because of their unfamiliarity with the technique, they did display a good deal of anxiety about having to write an extended composition in Spanish, as evidenced in the following commentaries: 'Right now I'm a little apprehensive about writing a composition in Spanish, but that may change when I become more familiar with the language'; 'Are we going to be familiar enough with Spanish to be able to write a composition for the final?'.[5]

By the third week, written performance, based in large part on the Silent Way worksheets, began to reflect a degree of sophistication and creativity not usually encountered in the early stages of foreign language study. According to Gattegno (1976, 134), the appearance of a sense of humor, daring, imagination and other personal traits in learners' performance is indicative of the strength of their

'link to the new language.' Di Pietro (1979, 3) maintains that the expression of individual personality traits through linguistic means is, in fact, a function of language which is no less important than the conveyence of information from speaker to listener. Appendix 1 contains samples of the students' written performance, from which it can be seen that their imaginations and other personal qualities had begun to emerge, even though their overall linguistic skills in Spanish were still at a nascent stage of development. What is more, some of the students exhibited a good deal of pride in their ability to produce coherent and interesting essays in the target language as illustrated by the remarks of a student who had shared her compositions with friends pursuing their final semester of Spanish study: 'I have friends in their last 3 hours of Spanish who have read my stories and say they couldn't write them.'

Input and Acquisition

One of the important areas of second language research in recent years has been concerned with what is known as the 'input hypothesis'. This hypothesis claims that if a learner can comprehend a given message framed in language which is slightly beyond the learner's level of competence at that moment, the linguistic structures used to convey the message are available for integration into the learner's interlanguage system (see Krashen 1982). In deciphering the content of such messages, the learner not only utilizes linguistic information but also relies upon the pragmatic environment in which an

utterance is embedded. In informal extra-classroom settings, the messages to which adult learners are exposed are often spatially and temporally displaced from the immediate pragmatic surroundings to be easily comprehended and therefore do not qualify as relevant input. Thus although informal settings are usually touted as the most suitable environments for learning language, they may not be adequately constrained to provide the optimal input necessary in the early stages of the language acquisition process (Krashen 1980, 76). Krashen in fact argues that 'for those involved in second and foreign language teaching it [the input hypothesis] predicts that the classroom may be an excellent place for second language acquisition, at least up to the "intermediate" level' (Krashen 1980, 76).[6]

One of the axioms of Silent Way methodology is that other than in the case of pronunciation activities, there is to be no use of language in the absence of meaning. It is through meaningful practice rather than rote repetition that inner critera necessary to distinguish right from wrong, correct from incorrect, and appropriate from inappropriate are cultivated (Gattegno 1972, 29). Meaning here is intended to include more than the semantic content of an utterance but also encompasses a broader context, which emphasizes the relationship between linguistic expression and the observable world. In the early stages of the second-language learning process the link between language and pragmatic setting is indispensable.

Asher (1977) characterizes the link between linguistic utterance and the observable in terms of what he refers to as the 'believability

hypothesis' and provides an excellent illustration of its applicability in the passage cited below:

> . . . translating Tate into 'stand up' and Suware into 'sit down' has low believability. The unconscious logic may be this: How can Tate mean 'stand up' when I have learned through thousands of previous experiences that when I heard the utterance 'Stand up!', I have observed the physical behavior of myself and others standing up. Since the utterance, 'Stand up' means to stand up, how can Tate mean to stand up? The English utterance, 'Stand up' has high believability while the Japanese utterance, Tate has low believability. The hypothesis is that when there is a conflict between high believability datum and low believability datum, the high will tend to dominate (Asher 1977, 32).

In Silent Way methodology, when a student utters dame la regleta roja 'give me the red rod', he does not then hear someone translate it into English or change into a negative command, as is often the case in foreign language classrooms; rather he observes someone giving him the red rod, or he may hear someone refuse to comply with his demand, as in no quiero 'I don't want to'. In terms of the believability hypothesis, 'it may be extremely difficult to deny factual input in the form of primary experience [i. e., dame la regleta roja must mean 'give me the red rod', if not, why was a particular action performed in response to my utterance?'], but easy to deny unconsciously the validity of a statement by the instructor that an

alien noise coming from his mouth means what he says it means' (Asher 1977, 32).[7] Without the opportunity for observation of the relationship between linguistic signs and what is perceived by the senses and for participation in the learning process, the learner's comprehension is drastically impeded and, as a consequence, his acquisition of the target language is inhibited.

Silent Way and similar methodologies allow the learner to experience in a classroom setting what Bullock (cited in D'Anglejan 1978, 218) characterizes as 'genuine learning', which takes place in the natural setting through discovery rather than through explicit presentation of principles and rules. In this respect, the conditions under which learning is fomented in Silent Way methodology parallels more closely those conditions under which language acquisition takes place in the extra-classroom environment than does learning in a more traditional foreign language instructional approach.

There are no doubt some who would argue that the manipulation of colored rods is not akin to anything speakers do with language in the natural setting. Canale and Swain (1981), for example, remark that a communicative approach must be based on the type of target language input learners are likely to encounter in the outside world. In recent years, a great deal of the literature on language pedagogy has been decidated to the issue of importing the real world into the classroom setting. Maley (1980, 13) believes, however, that classrooms have their own authenticity and teachers would do better to aim at the creation of 'an authentic learning

community rather than to try to desparately import the outside world.' Palmer (1979), in fact, discovered that it is possible for students to acquire pragmatic knowledge of a target language simply through the use of contrived in-class activities that have little resemblance to real life events.

Since learning in the classroom setting, just as in the natural setting, requires comprehensible input, the chances of students comprehending linguistic input are greatly improved if teachers create as rich a pragmatic context as possible, given the constraints of the classroom. One way of doing this, according to Burt and Dulay (1981, 183),is through the use of concrete referents, which are 'extra-linguistic items that can help the learners grasp the meaning of the sounds of the new language.' These concrete referents include things and activities that can be seen, heard, or felt, while the language is being used. It would seem then that colored rods qualify as concrete and viable referents.

Several students commented on how using the language in what they perceived as relevant contextual situations markedly facilitated the task of learning Spanish: 'It was nice to use the language instead of memorizing grammatical charts and terms. This is definitely the best way to learn to speak'; 'this course was more beneficial to my practical knowledge of language than any other I have taken. Having taken conventional courses in two other language, I was surprised to find out that I would actually retain Spanish without all the rote memorization required by conventional courses'; 'I feel that I have

learned quite a bit more this way than if I had to learn grammar out of the context in which it is to be used'; 'the class was much different from other classes. Instead of learning from a book, students learned more by putting Spanish into situations.' Perhaps the most insightful comment attesting to the type of learning that takes place in a Silent Way classroom came from a student, who became so enthusiastic about her progress that she pursuaded her husband, an air-traffic controller, to participate in the class: 'The way I learned this 5 weeks is a simulation of how I would be learning if (husband's name) had been transferred to Spain.'

According to Stevick (1976, 114-116), we cannot be certain that the deepest kind of learning (presumably, acquisition) has taken place until there is evidence that what has transpired in the classroom setting is transferred to the outside world. It is in using the language in the informal environment that learners manifest their total independence from whatever support, intentional or otherwise, might be provided by the classroom. The general lack of transferrability has been one of the major criticisms that is frequently leveled against most instructional programs in foreign languages (d'Anglejan 1978, 226). Most language teachers have at one time or other experienced the frustrations of witnessing their students' unwillingness to engage in spontaneous interactions in the target language once outside of the classroom setting. Unfortunately, a common remedy for such student behavior has been more pattern drills, more dialogues to be memorized, more grammar, more vocabulary lists,

more years of study, etc. The remedy, however, is not to be found in the quantity or intensity of classroom practice but in the quality of the interactions that take place in the classroom. D'Anglejan (1978, 227), for example, reports that students participating in French as a second language programs in Quebec, even after as much as twelve years of study, tended to avoid all occasions in which they might have used the language in a natural environment.

Lamendella (1979b), in a discussion of some of the findings of aphasic research and its possible implications for second-language study, presents an intriguing hypothesis as to why foreign language students are so often ill-equipped to engage in spontaneous communicative language use. He cites evidence from neurolinguistic research which shows that if a trauma or lesion occurs in a specific area of the brain, aphasic patients have been found to have the ability to perform such low-level tasks as repetition, substitution and other pattern drill-like activities, while at the same time loosing the capacity to use their language creatively and communicatively. On the basis of such observed behavior displayed by aphasic patients, Lamendella hypothesizes that the ability of learners to engage in pattern drill tasks, on the one hand, and communicative activities, on the other, may well stem from separate underlying neurological networks. It might be argued, of course, that while grammatical analysis and accompanying pattern drills do not enhance learners' communicative ability, they at least allow them to form generalizations about the linguistic system of the target language that might

prove beneficial in an indirect way as learners attempt to communicate in the target language. Lamendella, however, doubts that such generalizations are useful or even available to learners when they find themselves in a communicative situation. This is because human communicative abilities may well be controlled by a different neurofunctional hierarchy than that which controls substitution, repetition and other similar phenomena (Lamendella 1979b). According to Lamendella, it is therefore, better for learners to spend time acquiring an implicit knowledge of grammatical structure by engaging in actual communicative activities from the very outset of their foreign language experience than it is to waste time on the development of conscious knowledge of the linguistic system of the target language--knowledge that is likely to be of no use to them when they find themselves in situations requiring spontaneous interpersonal exchanges.[8]

Silent Way provides an instructional framework in which learners are allowed acquire the target language implicitly as a consequence of their interpersonal interactions rather than as a result of explicit discussion and analysis of linguistic structure. As Gattegno (1972, 28-29) points out, 'the rightness of a statement is to be felt, not deduced . . . the correctness of a statement lies in the matching of the sequence of words with the required habits of the native making such statements . . . the adequacy of a statement results from a matching of what is evoked by the words with the supporting dimensions (perceptive and active) of the corresponding situation.'

In most reports on Silent Way experiences with which this author

is familiar, the learners have been engaged in learning English as a second language (see, for example, Varvel 1979). Consequently, whether or not the method imparts the self-reliance and independence necessary to use the target language outside of the classroom setting, it is difficult for students to avoid encounters in which they are forced to press their English skills into service once they leave the language classroom. Beginning foreign language students, on the other hand, only rarely find themselves in similar circumstances on a consistent basis. Once they leave the classroom environment, their survival does not depend on an ability to interact in the target language.

While it is true that a bicultural community such as San Antonio can provide learners with ample opportunity to use Spanish in informal situation, no English-speaking individual need use the language in order to survive. Even in an area like San Antonio, if learners do not possess the requisite confidence in their linguistic abilities in Spanish, they can readily avoid all interpersonal contacts which might call for the use of the language. Be that as it may, many of students from the Silent Way class indicated either in their written commentary or through personal communication with the instructor that they felt sufficiently confident to use the language in the outside setting after what amounted to relatively few weeks of instruction. On student, who had felt uneasy at the outset of the course, and who had at one point unsuccessfully attempted to convince the instructor to provide her with a grammar text, made the following remark at the

conclusion of the first-semester: 'I have learned much more than I expected. Prior to this course my knowledge of Spanish was nil and now I would feel almost comfortable in a Spanish environment.' Another student commented on his use of Spanish while at work: 'Hope to be able to continue in the fall because learning in this way I am already able to understand and speak enough to be understood at work.' One student in particular, who had come to the class with no previous experience in Spanish, reported that by the third week of the course he had begun to communicate successfully in the language on a regular basis with several of his patients in a local hospital where he worked as a male nurse. Finally, two students volunteered to assist the instructor in giving Silent Way demonstrations at various local conferences and in-service programs. This entailed their having sufficient confidence to use Spanish before large groups of high school and university language teachers.[9]

Teacher Silence and Communicative Confidence

There is little doubt that in a relatively short period of time most of the students had gained the self-contained independence necessary to transfer what had been experienced in the classroom to the outside world. The cultivation of what might be called communicative confidence represents perhaps as important a notion for language methodologies as does the oft-debated concern over the development of communicative confidence. It is difficult to imagine how learners can attain communicative competence in a second language

without first having sufficient confidence to interact with others in the target language. Communicative confidence allows learners to engage in an ever-increasing variety of communicative interactions, thus generating more and more useful input. In this author's opinion, the goal of any second language program should not be communicative competence (i. e., the ability to communicate as a native speaker of the target language) but communicative confidence (i. e., the ability to communicate with a native speaker of another language).[10]

One means through which Silent Way seeks to cultivate communicative confidence in the learner is teacher silence. It is through silence on the part of the instructor, while the learners are interacting in the language, that the learners are thrown back onto themselves to elaborate their inner criteria (Gattegno 1972, 32). Teacher silence, however, does not mean that the instructor surrenders control of the classroom to the learners. The teacher still determines the nature of classroom activities and provides feedback (to be discussed below) but surrenders the initiative as to what is said, to whom and when, to the learners (Stevick 1980, cited in Taylor 1983, 76).

Teacher silence is not what students, nor teachers for that matter, have been conditioned to expect in the classroom setting. In a recent text intended for educators in general, Martin (1980, 57) points out that when properly implemented, silence usually enhances the 'quantity and quality of student responses.' According to Martin (1980, 77),

'interested silence invites others to talk.' By maintaining silence, the teacher encourages communication channels to expand among the students rather than preserving communication as a privileged activity between teacher and student. This is an important point in light of the claim regarding peer preference made by Burt and Dulay (1981), who contend that language learners, first or second, seem to prefer to obtain input from peers rather than from authority figures, whether inside or outside of the classroom.[11] Peer interaction is more likely to ensure that the comprehension condition of the input hypothesis, discussed earlier, is met, since peer input is more apt to be within the range of the competence net of learners than is teacher talk. Long (1983), for example, points out that while teacher talk may be completely comprehensible, it may still fail to serve as viable input for language acquisition. In many language classrooms, teacher talk is frequently improvished in a number of ways, since it is usually limited to 'predigested sentences, structurally and lexically controlled, repetitious in the extreme, and with little or no communicative value' (Long 1983, 222). In most cases teacher talk is little more than a veiled request for students 'to display knowledge that the teacher already possesses' (Long 1983, 218) and is often comprised of such questions as Is the clock on the wall? or Are you a student? In short, while teacher talk may indeed meet the comprehensibility requirement, it too often fails to meet the i+1 requirement proposed by Krashen, which states that for input to be useful for acquisition, it must contain linguistic information that is

slightly beyond a learner's current second language capability.

Salah (1981) reports that alghough a few students in a Silent Way class at the University of Delaware felt instructor input was important because it would be more accurate than that provided by one's peers, the majority of students preferred to interact with their peers, because, as one student remarked, 'when students speak you listen better than when the teacher does', and, as another student comments, 'it's kind of emphasizing it when students speak instead of the teacher.' Teacher silence also seems to foster a sense of cooperation among students: 'I like students' cooperation and I feel that it is helpful especially when you get stuck and you are unable to say something. At least they give you a clue' (Salah 1981).

Exactly how teacher silence fosters communicative confidence in learners cannot be stated with absolute certainty at this point; nevertheless, I would like to take the liberty of offering an explanation that must, for the time being, remain as speculative. Faerch and Kasper (1983) contend that foreign language learners have implicit knowledge of communication strategies and are able to make use of them without formal instruction. Actually, they argue that we should make learners aware of these strategies and instruct them in how to use them most appropriately. Whether this can be achieved through explicit instruction and conscious practice is a matter still open to debate. Be that as it may, I would like to propose the possibility that the teacher's surrender of initiative to the learners through self-imposed silence may instill in the

learners, at the preconscious level at least, the realization that they are capable of interacting in a language other than their native tongue and that through the use of communicative strategies such as inferencing, coinage, mime, appeals, etc., they are able to fulfill a specific communicative goal. This in turn must have a positive impact on their confidence to use the new language in an ever-increasing range of interactions. In teacher-centered classrooms, on the other hand, it may be the case that because of the fear of making mistakes, learners adopt risk-avoiding strategies, which of course, are not communicatively satisfying, since learners may feel coerced into recasting their intended goal in order to placate the teacher whose primary concern is linguistic precision.

In his commentary on the effects of teacher feedback in the learning process, Martin (1980, 119) offers what amounts to a strong rationale for teacher silence in the second language classroom: 'Encouragement to learn doesn't come from praise, . . . from stimulating materials, or from an interested energetic teacher; . . . but from the students themselves. Students feel encouraged to learn when they feel responsible for learning and when they feel that they have some control [i.e., initiative] over their learning.'

The fact that the silent way teacher does not pass verbal judgment on student performance does not mean that he or she does not in some way provide what Schachter (1982) refers to as negative input. According to Schachter, negative input, quite possibly a necessary condition for language acquisition, frequently occurs in exchanges

that take place between language learners and their native speaker interlocutors in the informal setting. In this framework, negative input is rarely if ever structured as an overt value judgment, at least in the American cultural milieu, of a learner's linguistic activity; rather, it is formulated as a question, a confirmation check, or some other non-evaluative reaction related to message content instead of linguistic form (Schachter 1982). In other words, a native speaker is not likely to say 'What you said is ungrammatical or incorrect and should be said this way'; instead, the native is much more apt to respond with 'Do you mean . . . ?' or 'I see, I understand.' In some instances, the native may choose not to respond in such a way but may prefer instead to make a guess as to the intended message and react accordingly, in which case the learner is left to his or her own judgment to determine whether or not the intended message was received.

Salah (1981) reports that even though the instructor makes no verbal assessment of learner performance in the silent way classroom, at least two sources of negative input appear with great frequency in this learning situation: one, peer assistance, has already been considered in the preceding discussion; the other, non-verbal gestures and facial expressions, untentionally imparted by the instructor, seem to play a central role in the learning process, especially in the early stages. Salah's interviews with students reveal that even though they perceived peer interaction and teacher silence to be positive factors, at the outset of the experience, most learners

reported feeling some frustration at not having some degree of feedback from the instructor, until they learned how to read his non-verbal reactions to their performance in a given task. It is important to point out that none of the students perceived these reactions to be in any way anxiety producing, even when they were interpreted as negative. As the course progressed, the students reported that they paid decreasing attention to the instructor's non-verbal commentary, because they felt more secure in their own abilities to perform in the target language.

Affect

The issues considered in the preceding section are not unrelated to matters of affect and anxiety in the language learning process. Curran (1968, 295) emphasizes that 'any discussion of the educative process has really to start with the relation of conflict, hostility and anxiety to learning.' It is not at all uncommon to find that a beginning language student comes to the learning situation with an elevated level of anxiety. The beginner usually approaches the learning process with fears of being seen as an 'ignoramus' by his competitors, whom he suspects of either already knowing more of the target language than he or of at least being superior language learners (La Forge 1975, 10). Moreover, the teacher is often seen as an 'adversary (at best a congenial sparing partner), against whom the learner may defend himself in a number of ways: by learning some of what he is told to learn, of course, but also by daydreaming,

by ridiculing the teacher behind his back, or by damaging books and equipment associated with the course' (Stevick 1976, 110). The commentary supplied by one of the students from the Spanish course after the first few days of class is a striking illustration of this point: 'Even though I personally hate to be forced to speak out in class, the participation idea in this class thus far has been better for me than regular classes. In the usual classes teachers tend to teach you to speak by embarrassment.' This student had apparently been embroiled in at least one, if not several, sparing matches with language teachers from which he had emerged as the loser. Yet, even though the student found that using the language actively in class was somewhat distasteful, perhaps as a consequence of his previous experiences, or perhaps because of his personality, his reticence to speak was diminished by what he perceived to be a less threatening environment than had been the case in his past efforts at learning a foreign language. A similar sentiment was expressed by another student, who also had seemingly undergone a negative language learning experience: 'The atmosphere was relaxing and there was not the anxiety and stress that is felt in most classes. I also like not being penalized for human error.'

Students from Salah's study commented that they had found the teacher's silence to be effective, because it helped them to 'struggle, think, and learn.' One student remarked that 'it is a positive silence, and not a negative one.' Another student reported that he felt more relaxed because 'if you make a mistake, he doesn't yell at you. He

just explains by gestures.'

The rapport that had developed among the students as a result of their attempts to communicate and help each other did not go unnoticed. At the conclusion of the first semester of the Spanish class, one student provided the following assessment of the classroom dynamics that had emerged: 'the class seemed much more enjoyable and people got to know each other better by just talking and helping each other during class.'

Research has shown that there are at least two general types of anxiety that can impact on an individual's performance in a task. Some psychologists have described these categories of stress as facilitating and debilitating anxiety (Scovel 1978). Others classify the anxiety types as emotional stress and operational tension (Leontiev 1981). Debilitating anxiety or emotional stress can have a paralyzing effect on an individual and may even compel him to avoid, at all cost, the task at hand (Scovel 1978, 139). Facilitating anxiety, operational tension, on the other hand, 'allows a person to "settle into" that activity, and always leads to the best possible performance. A driver in the rush hour, a pilot at landing, a teacher in his classroom. They all experience a state of operational tension' (Leontiev 1981, 70).

Anxiety can arise from any one or a combination of a number of sources, including an individual's personality, the perception of a task as either too difficult or as requiring more time to complete than allotted, and divergence between the person's motive for engaging

in the task and the aim of the task as determined by some other individual (Leontiev 1981, 70). Leontiev also mentions two additional factors which have direct bearing on the present discussion: negative remarks from the teacher or classmates and traces remaining from a previous successful or unsuccessful experience. The student who reported that teachers often embarrass students into speaking the target language seems to be reflecting a case in which an unsuccessful language learning experience had led to an increase in his emotional stress.

Krashen (1981, 29) discusses several studies in which the anxiety level of learners was found to be related to classroom performance. In one study it was discovered that fear of rejection and embarrassment at speaking the target language correlated with failure and diminished performance on specific formal tasks. Krashen speculates that low anxiety may foster language acquisition, while moderate levels of stress may enhance language learning.[12]

Leontiev (1981, 71) states it somewhat differently than Krashen but nevertheless seems to be of a similar opinion. He contends that if what is demanded from a learner is particularly difficult (i. e., beyond the learner's i+1, in Krashen's terminology) his level of awareness with reference to what is expected is likely to increase. This in turn may lead to an increase in emotional tension (debilitating anxiety) and a concommitant disruption in the activity. The increase in anxiety level manifests itself in a variety of ways, including loss of attention, increased errors, worsening of operative memory

and a lowering of the learner's general work capacity. The learner may eventually adopt a strategy in which he avoids the requisite experimentation with and creative use of the target language in favor of stereotypical and automatized protocols and expressions. Moreover, if the teacher and/or the learner's classmates pass judgment on his performance, his anxiety level may well rise to the point where he not only ceases to speak the language but gives up on language study altogether (Leontiev 1981, 71).

While teacher silence and positive rapport among the students can greatly lessen the risk of indúcing emotional tension in language learners, they do not in themselves foster the emergence of operational tension, needed for an individual to confront and actively engage in learning. Operational tension will arise from within the learner if the teacher surrenders initiative to the students and if the tasks presented to the learners are carefully planned so that the learners will perceive them as attainable (i. e., at i 1, in Krashen's terms).

While one cannot be absolutely certain, the commentary that follows may well be indicative of an enhanced level of operational tension among the students who participated in the Spanish class at UTSA: 'I enjoyed the method, although it did keep my anxiety level high'; 'the different method kept the class interesting and kept everyone on their toes'; 'I like the fact that students stayed involved . . . all in all I enjoyed the class, but just had a feeling of uneasiness'; 'thank you for a great (but painful) and satisfying experience'. If

anxiety experienced by the student had been a negative factor in the learning process, it does not seem likely that they would have talked about it in the way they did.

Cloze test

At the conclusion of the first semester course, all students enrolled in lower-level Spanish classes at UTSA participated in a language assessment project conducted by the Division of Bicultural/ Bilingual Studies at the university. One of the tests used in the project was a fifty-item cloze passage taken from a fifth-grade reader written for native speakers of Spanish. In addition to the Spanish students, the test was administered to graduate students in bilingual studies, the majority of whom had acquired the language in a natural setting. The results of the test, presented for the first time in Lantolf and Streiff (1980), showed a marked difference in performance between the Silent Way students and those from the regular sections of Spanish (see Table 1).

As pointed out earlier, this paper is not intended as a report on the findings of a controlled experiment; consequently, the scores given in Table 1 must be examined with caution. It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that the mean scores for each of the regular sections of Spanish were at the frustrational reading level, as determined by Peterson, et al (1973), while the scores from the Silent Way class indicate that these students were at the instructional reading level. The scores for the bilinguals were at the inde-

Table 1

Mean Score

Fifth-Grade Cloze Passage

Group	Mean Exact Word	Mean Sensible Word
1st semester	14%	16%
2nd semester	18%	20%
3rd semester	22%	25%
Silent Way	41%	44%
Bilinguals	70%	77%

pendent reading level.

Structure

Before concluding the present paper, I would like to make a few remarks on an ill-fated attempt to introduce the formal study of grammar in the third and final semester of the experience. Since the third semester was indeed the final course in the required sequence of language study, the instructor did not feel constrained by the regular syllabus for Spanish, as had been the case in the two previous semesters. Consequently, a variety of topics and activities not normally included in the third-semester syllabus were incorporated into the Silent Way curriculum. Several native speakers of Spanish on the faculty of the university were invited to present lectures in the target language on topics ranging from Chicano culture to the social and political conditions in Central and South America. Moreover, since the students had successfully dealt with two of the readers used in Silent Way, El libro de las mil frases and Ocho cuentos, in the two previous semesters, it was felt that their reading ability could be enhanced even further through the introduction of short literary pieces from authors ranging from Julio Cortázar to Tomás Rivera. The students thoroughly enjoyed the selections and were able to discuss the stories in reasonable detail, even though some of the pieces such as Cortázar's El axolotl and Rivera's Y no se lo trago la tierra presented some readability problems due to regionalisms.

Despite the focus on content in the third-semester course, one

day a week had been reserved on the syllabus for the study of Spanish grammar. The expectation had been that a formal analysis of language structure would allow the students to improve the accuracy of their linguistic performance. To this end, a current review grammar (Chastain 1979) was adopted for classroom use. At first, the students were generally enthusiastic at the prospects of 'learning' grammar. By the third week of class, however, it had become apparent to the instructor and the students alike that our efforts were not having the desired effect. Even though the students had little difficulty in coping with the material in the grammar text, there was virtually no evidence of transfer of their ability to perform formal operations called in the grammatical exercises and their linguistic production in spontaneous classroom discussions. The instructor realized almost from the outset that the students were carrying out their assignments for no other reason than the syllabus required them to do so. There appeared to be a lack of genuine intrinsic interest on the students' part to learn from the pedagogical rules considered in class. It might be speculated that even though the students had expressed an interest in studying grammar, they were also aware, perhaps subconsciously, that they could satisfactorily use their target-language abilities in communicative interactions without conscious knowledge of rules (see the above-mentioned studies of Lamendella and Seliger on this matter).

Failure to master pedagogical rules, however, does not mean that the learners had not internalized a system of rules: they would

have been unable to use the language had they not done so.[13] Although the students were unable to relate to such pedagogically appropriate labels as subjunctive, preterite, relative clause, and the like, they were, nevertheless, fully capable of focusing on linguistic form when the conditions for such an undertaking were adequate. At the conclusion of the third semester, a structural editing task was administered to the Silent Way class as well as to the regular sections of third-semester Spanish. The exercise asked students to identify and correct those of a series of sentences they believed to be ungrammatical (the exercise is included in Appendix 2). As can be seen from Table 2, both groups performed equally well on the task.

Of particular interest is that of the eight students who recognized and correctly recast the English-based items 20 and 22 (i. e., *Dame el libro sobre la cama 'Give me the book on the bed'→ Dame el libro que está sobre la cama and *La muchacha cantando en la calle es mi hermana 'The girl singing in the street is my sister' La muchacha que está cantando en la calle es mi hermana, five were from the Silent Way class.

Table 2

Mean Score on Editing Task

Group	Mean	SD	Range
3rd semester (N=64)	45%	5.03	22% -- 78%
Silent Way (N=24)	44%	6.64	18% -- 81%

Conclusion

Trabert (1980) discusses the findings of an investigation into the relationship between student aptitude and expectations upon entering a beginning foreign language program. She discovered that there was virtually no correlation between student aptitude, as measured by the Language Aptitude Battery, and student aspirations, as determined by a questionnaire, which she developed. Regardless of aptitude, students generally expected to be able to engage in moderate to extensive communicative activity as a result of one year of foreign language study.[14] Furthermore, Trabert contends that students who enter a language program with inflated aspirations frequently become frustrated and drop out of the program, if they expend what to them is sufficient time and effort in language study and yet are unable to fulfill their expectations. Trabert is of the opinion that objectives such as the ability to read a menu or newspaper, purchase an item in a store, travel as a tourist, greet friends, and the like, are overly optimistic and suggests that teachers undertake an instructional strategy designed to disabuse students of their unrealistic aspirations and to convince them that nothing more than the most minimal level of competency in a foreign language should be the anticipated reward for their efforts (Trabert 1980, 386).

Valdman (1978) and Valdman and Warriner-Burke (1980) express an even more pessimistic viewpoint than Trabert with respect to the prospects of developing communicative ability in the classroom setting. In both papers, the authors argue that advocates of communicative

language instruction, such as Lantolf (1977), have set a goal which is virtually impossible to achieve in any significant way in a formal language program. Citing Schumann's (1978) assertion that deviant-free language acquisition is realizable only as a by-product of the acculturation process, Valdman (1978, 81) concludes that foreign language teaching has no other recourse but to 'retain its traditional stress on language learning[as opposed to acquisition]and analytical skills.' The purpose of foreign language programs, according to Valdman, should be to develop a conscious knowledge of the basic structures of the target language (carried out through the use of contrastive mode of presentation) in order to illustrate the 'impressive variety of complex and delicate devices language puts at man's disposal to express logical relationships, to highlight parts of a message, to transmit subtle connotations' (Valdman 1978, 84-85). Valdman goes on to say that the 'greatest contribution FL study can make to general education is in instilling linguistic tolerance by a demonstration of the nature of language variation and by an exploration of the functions that variation serves' (Valdman 1978, 85).

In order to implement their approach to foreign language instruction, Valdman and Warriner-Burke (1980, 262) propose what they refer to as a 'little language' syllabus comprised of target language items that are easily pronounced and spelled, morphologically regular and syntactically predictable. While I would not necessarily disagree with a proposal for a reduced language syllabus, especially with regard to the structural dimension of language, it would seem that the

underlying motivation for such a proposal is somewhat tenuous. The fact that deviant-free language acquisition is a highly unlikely, if not impossible, end product of classroom language instruction does not mean that students cannot develop considerable ability to interact with others in a second or foreign language in a formal environment. The desire for structural accuracy or even a marked degree of communicative competence may well have been an unrealistic objective of second language programs. Our goal should be for students to communicate with native and other speakers of a language and not as native speakers of the language. To attain this much more reasonable objective, students need to develop, not communicative competence but communicative confidence, as discussed in the present paper. Based on my experiences with Silent Way, and more recently with other innovative methods, such as Strategic Interaction, I am convinced that communicative confidence is indeed a goal that is achievable in the classroom setting.

While the position expressed in my 1977 paper may have been too ambitious, it would appear that the reaction of Valdman and Warriner-Burke represents too extreme a retreat in the other direction. To argue that we should not encourage students at every step to interact openly and freely in another language simply because native ability is an instructional pipedream does not do justice to our abilities as teachers nor to those of our students as learners. Students need not be disabused of their expectation, as proposed by Trabert; rather

teachers should endeavor to investigate the many innovations that have taken place in language-teaching methodology in recent years and then undertake to implement the methodology that best fits their particular set of instructional circumstances in order to provide learners with the optimal opportunity to fulfill their expectations. It is hoped that the present paper will at the very least demonstrate that the pursuit of such a course of action can indeed produce satisfying results.

Notes

[1] In the literature on second language learning, the term 'real' is usually reserved for the extra-classroom domain. It is important, however, not to lose sight of the fact that the classroom is part of the real world, especially as contrasted with the experimental laboratory.

[2] Acton, et al (1981) present a second language acquisition heuristic which closely parallels the principles of Silent Way. According to Acton's LAH, the teacher, through indirect instruction (e. g., use of metaphor, models, etc.) seeks to make input available to the learners' unconscious mind. The learners are given sufficient latitude in using their own learning strategies rather than having strategies imposed by the instructor. The learners not only become aware that they have learned something, but they also become aware that there is a learning process at work (Acton, et al 1981, 532).

[3] As it turned out, this was the proper decision, since word quickly spread throughout the student body about the new way of teaching language. Consequently, great pressure was exerted by students to be admitted to the special section in subsequent semesters.

[4] Only two of the students who began during the summer were unable to accomodate their fall schedules to include the special section of Spanish. Several students even decided to rearrange their major course sequence in order to continue with the Silent Way class. One student, who normally attended another area university, became so

enthusiastic about her progress in the language that she registered for the fall class and made a special trip three times a week to UTSA rather than continue her language study at the university where she had been enrolled.

[5]The method of formal testing currently in use at the University of Delaware includes a cloze passage, a dictation, a composition, and an individual oral interview with the instructor. In addition, we have developed a series of more or less open-ended activities in which the instructor acts out or has someone else act out a particular set of activities. The students are then asked to comment on or describe in either spoken or written format, depending on the purpose of the test, what it is they observe. In the early stages of the program, the activities may be as simple as selecting a colored rod and placing it on a table or giving it to someone. Students are free to say or write whatever they please about the activity; hence, learners usually provide a variety of perspectives, because in a such situations, there is no single correct response. Of course, students are expected to provide responses that are in some way relevant to the activity observed. If, for example, the instructor places a red rod behind a green rod, it is quite possible that some would perceive the action as the green rod being placed in front of the red one; or some may even decide to provide a description of the resulting state (i. e., la regleta verde está detrás de la roja).

[6]Actually, Krashen (1981) includes an additional feature required for input to become intake which is that the input must be simplified.

Although research has shown that adults usually provide what is called by the general heading of 'caretaker speech' for learners, be they adults or children, Schachter (1982) argues that this feature of input may not be a necessary condition for acquisition. She points out that in many non-Western cultures, children acquire language without the benefit of simplified input from parents.

[7] I have taken the liberty of substituting the Spanish example for Asher's original Japanese example.

[8] In a recent study, Seliger (1979) found no correlation between learners' knowledge of pedagogical rules and their linguistic performance. According to Seliger, while some learners of English were able to recite a rule for the use of the indefinite article a(-n), they were unable to produce the correct from of the article in actual speech. The reverse also proved to be true. That is, other learners were unable to formulate a rule to characterize accurately the use of a(-n) but were quite capable of producing the correct form of the article in their linguistic performance.

[9] Last year we asked several of our beginning Spanish students in Silent Way classes at the University of Delaware to participate in demonstrations of the method before groups of visiting language specialists from the Middle and Far East and Finland. According to the written reports which we received from the visitors, they were most impressed by the performance of our students in such demanding circumstances.

[10] Canale and Swain (1979) also use the term communicative confidence

when discussing the importance of meaningful interaction in second language programs. For them, however, communicative confidence does not lead to communicative competence; rather, the latter gives rise to the former: 'we think that exposure to realistic communication situations is crucial if communicative competence is to lead to communicative confidence' (1979, 51). Although Canale and Swain do not discuss communicative confidence in further detail, the implication of their position seems evident. It is difficult to imagine, however, how a learner could develop target language competence without first having confidence in his or her ability to communicate with others in the language. By ability to communicate I do not mean the ability to communicate with anything approaching native proficiency. I mean, instead, that learners must be able to interact with natives by any means possible. Learners must not hesitate to interact in the language once they leave the confines of the classroom setting. D'Anglejan (1978) reported, for example, that students in some of the French language programs in Canada usually avoided all out-of-class encounters with speakers of French, despite the fact that many of them had been studying the language for as many as twelve years. This, I would argue, resulted more from a lack of confidence rather than competence.

A student discussed in Salah (1981) made the following comment that is indicative of a learner who seems to have some notion of the importance of communicative confidence: 'If you meet a Spaniard on the road you're not going to know the language as well as he does, but

you have to communicate in some way. Therefore, textbooks are no good. He the instructor is giving us the fundamentals needed to communicate.'

Savignon (1983) presents an interpretation of communicative confidence similar to that expressed in this study.

[11]Wong-Fillmore (1982) discovered differences among children with reppect to peer preference for learning. While Hispanic children were observed to gravitate toward their peers in classroom interactions, Chinese children, on the other hand, looked to teachers and other adults for guidance rather than to their classmates. In addition, some may be concerned that peer interaction could lead to the development of a classroom dialect, which could differ to varying degrees from target language norms. The implications of this are yet to be determined, however, In a foreign language classroom, it would seem that the development of a classroom dialect may be unavoidable, even in cases in which the teacher plays an active role in communicating with students. There are at least two reasons for this: many foreign language teachers are themselves non-native speakers of the language; even in cases in which the teacher is a native or has near-native proficiency, teacher-talk is usually provided for learners in the early stages of a language program.

[12]The reason for this would seem to be that acquisition, at least according to Krashen, is a subconscious process that occurs optimally when the learner is focused on content rather than on linguistic form, while learning takes place when the learner is specifically concentrat-

ing on linguistic structure. Therefore, when the learner's attention is on content, his anxiety level can be expected to be low; whereas when he is concentrating more on conscious learning, he is aware of what he is attempting to learn, and consequently, his anxiety level should be higher.

[13]This is not to say that there is no practice in the Silent Way classroom. What is practiced, however, is practiced through language use and communicative interaction. Even when students engaged in activities which intentionally focus on language form, there is no presentation of grammatical principles. The students, with the guidance of the instructor, are encouraged to discover for themselves how the language is structured. Seliger (1979) proposes that a fruitful area of research would be the investigation of the nature of the linguistic rules which learners do eventually internalize. This is an especially intriguing issue in the case of a method like Silent Way, which presents language in an iconographic format (see Seliger 1979, 366).

[14]In a survey conducted by Virginia Streiff and reported on in Lantolf and Streiff (1980), it was found that 67% of all students enrolled in beginning Spanish classes at UTSA during the spring semester of 1979 had as their primary motivation for language study the desire to be able to communicate in the target language; 15% indicated that their only reason for studying the language was simply to fulfill the requirement; 13% expressed an interest in learning grammar and vocabulary; 3% desired to learn how to communicate as well as to study grammar and vocabulary;

2% expected to acquire some knowledge of Hispanic culture.

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Appendix 1

Compositions

All are based on the fourth picture in a series of ten Silent Way worksheets and were written after the eleventh class meeting during the summer session of 1979 at UTSA.

1. El hombre y la mujer estan de paseo. Hoy no es un dia de trabajo y estan en el campo. Ven un arbol con las ramas grandes y muchas hojas y tiene una sombra. Ahora, estan sentados en la hierba fresca. Tienen una cesta con algunos alimientos. Toman un mantel y lo ponen en la hierba. Estan tendidos en el mantel y beben mucho vino. El hombre dice, 'Te quiero.' Ahora, la cara de la mujer es roja oscura. Ella no dice nada. Estan silenciosos. El esta fumando y ella esta concentrada. Ella dice, 'No te creo.' 'Por que no?' pregunta el hombre. Ella dice, 'Porque usted conoce muchas muchachas.' 'Es verdad' el dice, 'pero usted es mi muchacha favorita.' Pero los dedos del hombre estan cruzados. 'No soy estupida' ella dice y se levanta. El se levanta tambien. La botella de vino esta vacio. La mujer no esta aqui. El hombre esta dormido en la hierba, pero sus dedos no estan cruzados y una sonrisa esta en su cara. (The author had no previous experience with Spanish)

2. Miguel y Susana estan en el dormitorio de la joven. Los jovenes estan enamorados pero el papa de Susana no le gusta Miguel. Susana esta sentada en la silla y Miguel esta en el suelo. Susana tiene

un gato que se llama Alejandro. Alejandro es un gato muy misterioso. Habla en el telefono al papa de Susana, 'Miguel esta en el dormitorio con Susana.' Susana y Miguel quieren hacer un piscolabis porque el dia esta muy bonito y apacible. Los jovenes les gustan el campo mucho. Susana pone pan, queso, chorizo, y otras cosas en la cesta. Preparan a ir. El papa de Susana habla, 'Abre la puerto, Susana.' Susana la abre. El papa dice que Alejandro habla en el telefono, 'Miguel esta en el dormitorio de Susana.' Susana habla, 'Papa, los gatos no hablan.' 'Vamos, Miguel.' (The author had no previous experience with Spanish)

3. Hoy es sabado y Romeo y Julieta quieren tener un piscolabis. Julieta no le gusta el padre de Romeo. El tiene ochenta años y es muy miope. El papa de Julieta no le gusta el padre de Romeo tampoco porque es un Republicano. Son las seis de la mañana, Romeo camina a la casa de Julieta y los jovenes caminan al campo. Romeo cierra la puerta del dormitorio y papa dice 'Romeo esta dormido' y camina suavemente al otro cuarto. El gato empuja la puerta y la abre. Papa mira que Romeo no esta alli y esta muy furioso. Papa camina al campo muy rapidamente y busca Romeo y Julieta. Ellos son novios. Papa mira los dos y quiere que es un joven. Papa camina a la casa con sonrisa grande en la cara. (Author studied Spanish for one year in junior high school)

Appendix 2

Editing Task

Instructions: the sentences given below may be grammatically correct or incorrect. If you think a sentence is correct, circle sí; if you think the sentence is incorrect, circle no and then correct the sentence by changing, adding, or deleting any of its elements.

1. Somos católico sí no
2. Tengo cuatras hermanas
3. Tengo un oro reloj
4. Estoy hambre
5. Llegamos a nuestras casa
6. Yo entró en la sala
7. Dudo que Juan vendrá
8. Juan llegó mientras yo estudié
9. Estoy de San Antonio
10. Creo que el profesor sabe mucho
11. ¿Dónde es Juan?
12. Prefiero que se vaya
13. Es posible que Jose sabe escribir en francés
14. Lilí lo ha dicha
15. ¿Dónde va a ser la fiesta?
16. Ayer hablaré con María
17. Comí a la una
18. Personas están pasando por el edificio

19. Los animals son grandes

20. La muchacha cantando en la calle es mi hermana

21. Dame el libro sobre la cama

22. Espero Juan coma bien

23. Los cuervos voló hacia la luna

24. No tengo ninguna regleta

25. ¿Dónde vas?

26. Veo al hombre

27. Tomo la regleta amarilla antes de la negra

28. No hay nadie aquí que sepa italiano

29. El tren está saliendo a las dos

30. Son unos profesores muy buenos

31. Vi las verdes luces de la ciudad

32. Lo llueve todos los días

33. Hay el accidente en la esquina

34. Está llegando mañana

35. Me gusta vino

36. La ventana está abierta

37. Hombre es mortal